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STATE FOR EUR/SE AND EUR/RPM, DOD FOR OSD/ISA - ELLEHUUS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/27/2016
TAGS: [GR](#) [MARR](#) [NATO](#) [PREL](#) [NATOAFGHAN](#)
SUBJECT: GREECE UPGRADING C-130S IN PREPARATION FOR
POSSIBLE ISAF ROLE

REF: 3/23 ELLEHUUS-RANK E-MAIL

Classified By: Political Counselor Karen Decker for Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (C) Greece is in the process of upgrading the self-protection systems on 2 of its C-130s and, once complete and providing national security conditions allow, will make one of them available to ISAF, MFA NATO Affairs Division official Andreas Kintis told poloff March 27. Based on a March 24 conversation with Defense Ministry officials responsible for operations, however, Kintis predicted that Greece would not meet the September deployment target cited by Greek Ambassador to the U.S. Mallias in his March 21 meeting with Deputy Defense Secretary Englund. Kintis said his understanding was that the costs of stationing and operating the aircraft would fall on Greece, and not NATO common funding.

¶2. (C) Kintis emphasized that there had not been a final decision on the deployment, but agreed that Ambassador Mallias's comments suggested that the government was leaning strongly towards approval. As the government had not yet made a formal decision on the matter, he said, NATO had not been informed. Kintis agreed that, if the deployment took place, while the C-130 would most likely be based at the Kabul airport, the need to use it in-country would effectively end the Greek caveat on operations outside of the capital.

¶3. (C) Comment. Greece has steadily and without fanfare expanded its participation in Afghanistan, a trend we expect to continue. The C-130 will join Greek combat engineers and medics, along with personnel assigned to the SEEBRIG unit now at the ISAF HQ in filling very real NATO needs. We will continue to push the government here to identify additional assets to deploy, to give those now in country greater flexibility to operate, and to work harder to build public support for the good work Greece and NATO are doing in Afghanistan. The next steps are clear. In the short run, we will urge the Minister of Defense to use a possible April visit to Kabul to highlight to ordinary Greeks the good news coming from NATO's involvement in the country. Longer term, we will work to finalize a Greek commitment to deploy the NDC-GR to lead the Kabul multinational brigade in 2008 and push for the more politically fraught decision to take part in, or lead, a PRT. Meanwhile, Greece deserves credit for overcoming its considerable risk aversion to expand its contribution to the ISAF mission.
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